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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report covers the period from September 1999 to July 2000. It focuses on the functioning of the Regional Centre, its activities, staffing and financial situation.

The reporting takes place against the background of the revitalization process of the Centre towards which its current activities are geared. It should be stressed that the Centre continues to experience considerable financial difficulties due mainly to the lack of voluntary contributions on the basis of which it was established. The current revitalization process requested by Member States has yet to ensure the kind of financial support that will be forthcoming from them in order for the Centre to face, head on, the growing challenges to peace and security, in an environment where light weapons and small arms have become a major cause of concern for the continent. Since his appointment, in December 1998, the Director of the Centre has been pursuing a vigorous fund-raising programme. While a number of donors have made financial contributions to the activities of the Centre, the costs of staffing and operation remain a concern.

During the reporting period, the Centre strengthened its cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and provided substantive support for the initiatives and other efforts of Member States of the African region towards the implementation of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament. It also

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** This report covers the activities of the Regional Centre for the period from September 1999 to July 2000.

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initiated working relations with subregional organizations including the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of Central African States. Substantive support to African Governments for the realization of peace-related activities included the gauging of the socio-political context within which weapons collection programmes could be carried out in Guinea Bissau and backstopping the arms control efforts in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Niger and Togo. The Centre continues to serve as the operational and policy framework for the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED). It provides support for the implementation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, and to ECCAS for the implementation of peace and security activities, particularly under the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The Centre also participated, during the reporting period, in several conferences and seminars, including the seventy-first Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa and the Conference on the proliferation of small arms in the Greater Horn and Great Lakes region. The host country agreement was signed with the Government of Togo in November 1999 during the visit of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs to Togo.

While a number of Member States have made financial pledges in support of the implementation of the work programme of the Centre, as endorsed by the African Group of States at the United Nations, the Centre continues to experience financial, staffing and operational difficulties which impair its full functioning. The Secretary-General wishes to thank those Member States that have already made contributions to the Centre, encourage them to make additional contributions and continues to appeal to those Member States that have not yet done so to make voluntary contributions to the Centre.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/55 B of 1 December 1999, by which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa with all necessary support, within existing resources, for better achievements and results; to facilitate the establishment of close cooperation between the Regional Centre and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in particular in the area of peace, security and development, and to continue to assist the Director of the Regional Centre in his efforts to stabilize the financial situation of the Centre and revitalize its activities; and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report is also submitted in pursuance of Assembly resolution 54/55 E of 1 December 1999 on the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support, within existing resources, to the regional centres in carrying out their programmes of activities and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The report covers the period from September 1999 to July 2000.

II. Functioning of the Centre

3. The Centre was established in 1986 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/151 G of 16 December 1985. Its headquarters is located at Lomé, Togo. The Centre functions within the framework of the Department for Disarmament Affairs which ensures its supervision and acts as the focal point for coordinating the inputs of the pertinent organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to the Centre's activities.

4. As a first step towards revitalizing the Centre, the Director was appointed by the Secretary-General on 1 December 1998. In spite of insufficient financial resources, the Centre continues its revitalization process in the priority areas that were discussed and endorsed by the African Group of States of the United Nations in January 1999. They include: support for peace initiatives in Africa; arms control and disarmament; and information, research and publication.

III. Objectives and activities of the Centre

5. The Centre continued to carry out its mandate as contained in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 40/151 G. According to its mandate, the Centre shall provide, upon request, substantive support for initiatives and other efforts of Member States of the African region towards the realization of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region, in cooperation with OAU, as well as coordinate the implementation of regional activities in Africa under the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme.

6. During the reporting period, the Centre, despite financial constraints, continued to fulfil its mandate as far as possible by contributing to efforts to promote wider understanding and cooperation among African States in the areas of peace, disarmament and security. In this connection, it expanded its contacts and cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, research and academic institutions and other relevant United Nations bodies.

7. The Centre continued to publish and disseminate its quarterly bilingual publication, the *African Peace Bulletin* (*Bulletin africain de la paix*), which focuses on relevant developments in the field of peace, security and disarmament and related issues, mainly in the African region. It has substantially improved the quality, quantity and format of the *Bulletin*. In order to facilitate the dissemination of information on the Centre, a brochure containing basic information on the Centre was published and is being distributed widely. Work is also being finalized on the Centre's web site as an additional tool for information dissemination.

8. In collaboration with the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Government of Ghana, the Centre organized a workshop on the modalities of the establishment of an arms register and database on 23 and 24 September 1999 in Accra, Ghana. The workshop was recommended by the ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs during their meeting on 24 and 25 March 1999 in Bamako when they adopted the

Plan of Action for the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED).

9. In its capacity as the operational and policy framework for PCASED, the Centre held a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria from 16 to 26 October 1999, in collaboration with the Department for International Development, representing the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and officials from the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat. The objective of the meeting was to review the implementation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa (A/53/763-S/1998/1194, annex) in an effort to strengthen the capacities of PCASED and the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat in enforcing the Moratorium; and to determine the priority areas that needed external, financial, material or technical assistance that could be provided by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and other donors. The meeting also reviewed the draft code of conduct for the implementation of the Moratorium, which was adopted by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government during the 10 December 1999 Summit in Lomé, Togo.

10. From 25 to 27 October 1999 in N'Djamena, Chad, the Centre provided substantive support to the twelfth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and the subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms in Central Africa (see A/54/530-S/1999/1141).

11. In Guinea-Bissau, the Centre assisted the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) in formulating a project document on the basis of a fact-finding mission which it carried out in Guinea-Bissau in October and November 1999, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1233 (1999) of 6 April 1999. The aim was to encourage the Government and other interested parties towards the collection, neutralization and destruction of small arms. This mission, led by the Director of the Centre, had assessed the socio-political context within which a weapons collection programme could be carried out. It had suggested that the "food for weapons" collection method should be supplemented by "weapons for development" and "disarmament through persuasion" methods. The Centre also drew up the draft budget of the programme, which has now been submitted for consideration to donors and the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament. The Centre is expected to play a technical role in the implementation of the programme once the required funding becomes available.

12. From 16 to 18 November 1999, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs visited Togo and Mali. While in Togo, he signed the host country agreement with the Government of Togo, met with the President and the Prime Minister and held working sessions with the Foreign Minister. In Bamako, he met with the President for Mali and the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. He also addressed the diplomatic community in Mali on current disarmament and security issues.

13. The Centre organized the second session of the Advisory Group of PCASED in Lomé on 22 and 23 November 1999. The meeting reviewed the progress achieved in the work of PCASED during its first six months of existence and adopted a programme of work for the next six months.

14. In an effort to strengthen relations and cooperation with subregional intergovernmental organizations on the continent, the Director of the Centre visited Botswana from 1 to 3 December 1999, where he held talks with senior officials of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). With support from the European Union, SADC is in the process of negotiating among its member States a small arms protocol (combating illicit trafficking, strengthening legal controls on accumulation and transfer of small arms, promoting the removal of arms from society and the destruction of same, and enhancing transparency, information exchange and consultation on arms).

15. From 6 to 10 December 1999, the Centre participated in the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), at which the Director of the Centre, in his capacity as Director of the PCASED project, presented a progress report on the implementation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa and of PCASED. In their final report submitted to the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, the Ministers commended the Centre for the role it had been playing in supporting ECOWAS in the implementation of the Moratorium.

16. Prior to and during the Summit, the Centre also provided assistance in the finalization of the Code of Conduct for the implementation of the Moratorium as well as the formulation of a decision adopted by the Heads of State and Government urging member States to establish and/or strengthen national commissions for the control of light weapons.

17. For five days beginning 10 December 1999, an OAU mission worked with the Centre in Lomé. The mission was organized pursuant to decision AHG/Dec. 138 (XXI), adopted by the OAU Heads of State and Government at the Summit held in Algiers on 14 July 1999, which called for increased cooperation between the Centre and the pan-African organization. The mission set out to discuss specific areas of cooperation and needs for the revitalization of the Centre. The following areas of cooperation and support were agreed upon at the close of the mission:

(a) The Centre and its activities and objectives would be promoted by OAU through systematic reciprocal participation in relevant activities and by supporting advocacy programmes for the Centre, either by the secretariat or by the Chairman of OAU;

(b) Joint activities would be set up in the field of research and training, including participation in workshops and conferences;

(c) OAU would request the Director of the Centre to present an annual report on the Centre and its activities during the meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers or the Conference of Heads of State and Government. This suggestion was supported by the Togolese authorities, who believe that this would be an effective way of maintaining the Centre and its work in the political consciousness of African leaders. Togo plans to support an OAU decision or a resolution to this effect at the next OAU Summit, scheduled to be held in Lomé in July 2000.

18. During the reporting period, the Centre held working sessions with the Technical Committee set up by the Government of Togo to ensure the collection of weapons held illegally by the civilian population. Togo renewed its request for support from the Centre, notably, for elaborating a project document for the arms collection programme. In response to that request, the Centre has conducted a survey of the scope and magnitude of the problem in Togo, as well as the best methods for arms collection. On the basis of a questionnaire elaborated in this context, interviews and discussions have been held with government authorities, civil society, traditional and religious groups.

19. The Director of the Centre visited South Africa from 2 to 5 March 2000 to discuss the revitalization process of the Centre and to seek South Africa's support for it. While there, he participated in and chaired one of the sessions of the Conference on Demilitarization and Peace-building in Southern Africa organized by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) (www.bicc.de) and the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) (ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za) in South Africa. The conference reviewed demilitarization and peace-building, highlighting the experiences of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia.

20. From 6 to 10 March 2000, the Director of the Centre participated in the seventy-first Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Council reviewed preparations in harmonizing Africa's position for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for 2001. To this effect, the Centre was invited by OAU to become more actively and directly involved in the planning of the OAU Ministerial Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, due to take place in Bamako, Mali, from 30 October to 3 November 2000. The Centre was also entrusted with the responsibility of organizing a conference of African non-governmental organizations on small arms and light weapons. At separate meetings with the OAU Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, and the Director of the OAU Conflict Management Centre, Mr. Sam Ibok, the Director of the Centre sought and obtained OAU support for two of the Centre's activities: the child soldier exhibit and the Forum of African First Ladies to Eradicate Child Soldiering in Africa, both scheduled to take place on the sidelines of the July 2000 OAU Summit in Lomé, Togo.

21. From 12 to 15 March 2000, in Nairobi, Kenya, the Director of the Centre represented the Secretary-General in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms. He also made a presentation on the magnitude and scope of the proliferation of small arms which, inspired by the West African moratorium and PCASED, invited countries in the region to adopt a common approach based on the

principle of "security first". The Conference adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (A/54/860-S/2000/385, annex) and, while designating the Government of Kenya to coordinate the follow-up activities in consultation with the participating States in the region, requested the United Nations to provide assistance in the implementation of the Declaration. A first request made by Kenya in this regard concerns the carrying out of a study on the magnitude and scope of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in these regions. The ministerial segment of the Conference, which was opened on 14 March 2000 by President Daniel Arap Moi, highlighted the continued climate of conflict and distrust among States and stressed the need to establish credible data on the proliferation of small arms. In addition to participating in the Conference, the Director of the Centre took the opportunity to discuss with President Arap Moi and other personalities present at the Conference, security questions in Africa and the revitalization process of the Centre as initiated by the Secretary-General.

22. A mission from the Centre was dispatched to Niamey, Niger, from 8 to 11 March 2000, within the context of PCASED activities. The mission was organized, inter alia, to provide support for a conference to sensitize civil society on weapons proliferation in that country. The mission also held working sessions with the Niger National Commission for the campaign against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as with the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in that country.

23. As a key partner to OAU and pursuant to the OAU General Assembly decision AHG/Dec. 137 (LXX) on Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Centre helped stage a meeting of African experts on small arms in Addis Ababa from 16 to 21 May 2000. The objective of the meeting was to prepare the Ministerial Conference on Small Arms, scheduled to be held in October/November 2000. This would help formulate a common African position for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for 2001. The expert meeting was followed on 22 and 23 June 2000 by a consultation with the objective of seeking the support of the relevant United Nations agencies and other actors concerned in developing a common African approach.

24. From 24 to 29 May 2000, a three-member delegation led by the Director of the Centre undertook a substantive working session in Abuja, Nigeria, for the twenty-fifth anniversary Summit of ECOWAS. The objectives of the mission also included: (a) to present a report on the progress achieved so far in the execution of PCASED and in the implementation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa; and (b) to provide technical support and assistance to the Government of Nigeria to establish a National Commission for the campaign against the proliferation of small arms.

25. The Secretary-General of OAU visited the Centre on 15 May 2000. During his visit, he reaffirmed OAU support for the work of the Centre and expressed support for the growing collaboration between the Centre and the pan-African organization. The Secretary-General of OAU also pledged support for the Centre in the organization of a child soldier exhibit entitled "Taking aim at small arms" on the sidelines of the July 2000 OAU Summit in Lomé. The inauguration of the child soldier exhibit has been formally integrated by OAU as part of the official opening ceremony of the Summit, which is to be attended by all Heads of State and Government as well as African First Ladies. A joint press conference was given by the Secretary-General of OAU and the Director of the Centre on peace, security, stability and disarmament issues in Africa.

26. The Centre has also continued to distribute information materials on disarmament and related issues published by the Secretariat and other United Nations organizations. To this end, it has launched a new publication entitled *The Regional Centre Update*, which highlights specific peace and security topical events on the continent. Pending the availability of resources to enlarge its readership, this publication is disseminated primarily to the diplomatic community, international organizations and institutions based in Lomé.

27. Visitors to the Centre's headquarters were briefed on issues relating to peace and disarmament and received relevant information materials. Delegations composed of political, diplomatic, academic and other leading personalities visited the Centre during the

reporting period. These included delegations from the European Union, Canada and Sweden as well as the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and, as mentioned above, the Secretary-General of OAU.

28. The Centre's documentation/reference library continued to receive publications from within and outside the African region. It is visited by students, researchers and members of the diplomatic corps in Lomé. In order to increase the number of its library documents, the Centre maintained an exchange of documents with some research and academic institutions.

29. The Centre has embarked on a project to determine the routes and caches of light weapons in the region. This is intended to identify illicit traffickers of light weapons in the region, establish why illicit trafficking is facilitated by poor policing of borders and advance the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa.

30. The Centre provided support to the West African Conference on Child Soldiers held in Accra, Ghana, on 27 and 28 April 2000 with financial support from the Government of Canada. It drafted one of the concept papers and served as rapporteur of the ministerial segment of the meeting. The Conference led to the adoption of a West African Action Plan.

31. The Centre continues to provide substantive support for the implementation of the West African Action Plan, besides launching an Africa-wide child soldier project. Apart from the awareness campaign on the issue of child soldiers, the Centre is organizing a child soldier exhibit on the margins of the thirty-sixth OAU Summit and will hold a forum for African First Ladies on the issue of child soldiers later in 2000.

32. The three-phased child soldier project of the Centre will synthesize and assess relevant literature on security and judicial reform and child soldiers; draft a proposal for a programme to strengthen the capacity of security and judicial institutions in the protection of children in armed conflicts as well as sensitize the general public on the harm done to children recruited in armed conflicts; and promote security and strengthen peace processes in countries emerging from armed conflicts so as to facilitate reconciliation in post-war situations, including the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society.

33. In early July, the Centre initiated a series of assessment missions to the Central African subregion to develop a "disarmament for development" programme. The initial phase of the programme will concentrate on Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic. This weapons collection programme is sponsored by Canada, and efforts are under way to secure support from UNDP, the European Union and other interested donors.

IV. Staffing, financing and administration

34. Since the appointment of the Director of the Centre by the Secretary-General in December 1998, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/46 E of 10 December 1996, persistent financial constraints have made it impossible for the Centre to operate at full scale to implement its work programme. The Centre continues to operate with a skeleton local staff at the General Service level. Thanks to financial contributions from the Government of Switzerland and the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT) (www.nisat.org), two consultants have been recruited to manage the implementation of the research project on routes and caches of small arms in Africa, and the project to strengthen the capacity of the Centre on the control of small arms, respectively. Furthermore, to facilitate the discharge of the Centre's responsibilities under the PCASED project, UNDP posted to the Centre, a Disarmament Programme Manager, an Information Systems Manager and an Associate Political Officer.

35. The functioning of the Centre continues to be hampered by the lack of sufficient resources to cover the operational costs. The Director's relentless fund-raising initiatives continue. Several contacts and consultations, including visits to Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America, have been made. Contacts were also made with the embassies of several donor countries at Lomé.

36. From August 1999 to July 2000, voluntary contributions in the amount of $227,263 were received. In 1999, the Government of France pledged FF 500,000 per year for five years starting in 2000. In 2000, the Government of Switzerland made a pledge of CHF 300,000 to be distributed over a three-year period

to support the project aimed at establishing an African clearing house for combating illicit trafficking in firearms. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Algeria, Canada, France, Mauritius, Norway and Switzerland as well as the Norwegian Red Cross for their generous support, and to the Government of Togo, the host country, for its overall support of the Centre. The status of the trust fund for the Centre covering the biennium 1998-1999 appears in the annex to the present report.

37. Owing to the ongoing financial situation of the Centre, the Secretary-General strongly supports and reiterates the appeals made by the General Assembly to Member States and governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals to provide voluntary contributions that would enable the full and effective operation of the Centre.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa covering the biennium 1998-1999

(United States dollars)

I.	Fund balance, 31 December 1997	143 837
II.	Income, 1 January 1998-31 December 1999	
	Voluntary contributions*	86 809
	Interest income	8 821
	Miscellaneous income	14 352
	Subtotal	**109 982**
III.	Expenditures	
	1 January 1998-31 December 1999	151 374
	Prior period adjustments	51 428
	Subtotal	**202 802**
IV.	**Fund balance, 31 December 1999**	**51 017**

Note: This information is based on the financial statement for the period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999. during the period from 1 January to 30 June 2000, additional contributions totalling $175,140 were received from Algeria ($5,000), Canada ($6,755), France ($21,932), Mauritius ($5,000), Switzerland ($56,475) and the Norwegian Red Cross ($79,978).

* 1998: Norway ($5,000); 1999: Italy ($10,000), Norway ($32,141), Sweden ($19,686), and the Norwegian Red Cross ($19,982).